together one free, circumambient reality. Love is extended into the vibrant openness of life; and at the end of the story, love is a cipher which attenuates, absorbs and unifies ail realities, and all individual contingencies of social reality. Love is not duty alone, loyalty alone, memory alone, vision alone, but all these things put together. Maggie transforms herself into a vehicle of this enhanced life acting through love; for, in her, and through her, love has already become one with Grace. And thus refinement, in the extended metaphor of love, becomes identical with freedom, which, on a human level, is charity, and, on the divine level, Grace. Refinement, in its essence, is an imitation of Grace. By intelligence, love, endurance and charity, Maggie brings about a change in her husband, which he humbly acknowledges in the end when he says, "I see nothing but you.""[3]

The *' golden bowl " is a multivalent symbol standing for a continuous spectrum of moral, spiritual and cultural refinement. Its structure and its structural flaw, as a single symbolic and artistic complex, dramatise the conflicts and ambivalences in the consciousness of all the characters both in general terms and in specific instances. In a general way, the "golden bowl" illustrates the allegorical relationship between good and evil. Perfection of life is not always a desirable consummation, for perfection may itself lead to the unbearable pressures of neglected instinct and repressed life; and it may unknowingly involve, too, life in the fettering complicities of virtue which, without the open, healthy choices of freedom, forces itself into the dark recoils of self-indulgence, or a hypersensitive hostility towards the world. If the "golden bowl" as a perfect piece of art stands for purity, the crack within it is a symbol of the sinful temptation which may flow from a virtue unsupported by a contact with evil. Maggie transcends the limited perspective of refinement, because she achieves an order of consciousness, which includes the perfection of purity as well as the freedom of imperfection, ft

is this encapsulated freedom, which her love contains, that redeems the Prince by proffering him not the absolutism of love, but the unfettering freedom of life itself. When Maggie thus becomes the embodiment of that moral refinement, for which the golden bowl stands in the abstract, the world outgrows the physical necessity of retaining the golden bowl as an artistic memento. It is therefore cast aside without any sense of loss, because the symbol has ultimately made room for th« truth, even as the perspective of beauty yields itself to the horizon of Grace transcending the landscapes ot man's sensate culture.